

Planning Commission Report

To: City Council

From: Planning Commission

Staff Contacts: Roberta Lewandowski, Director of Planning & Community Development, (425) 556-2447, rlwandowski@ci.redmond.wa.us
Rob Odle, Policy Planning Manager, 556-2417, rodle@ci.redmond.wa.us
Lori Peckol, Principal Planner, 556-2411, lpeckol@ci.redmond.wa.us

Date: August 19, 2003

DGA Number: DGA 02-013; Vision, Goals and Framework Policy Element

Recommendations:
Planning Commission: Approval.

Recommended Action: Adopt Ordinance No. _____, amending the Redmond Comprehensive Plan to add an updated Vision, Goals and Framework Policies Element and to remove existing framework policies from several elements. The recommended Vision, Goals and Framework Policies element is in Exhibit A.

Summary: Redmond is preparing a major Comprehensive Plan update; a key element involves adopting a strategy to accommodate planned growth through the year 2022 while enhancing the City's livability.

The first phase of the update involves proposed amendments to the Goals and Vision element, including the framework policies. This element is being updated to reflect the preliminary preferred growth strategy selected by City Council in January 2003, subsequent citizen input through several public meetings, and issues and opportunities facing the City.

Major updates in the recommendation compared to the existing framework policies include the following:

- Brings all the framework policies together in the Goals and Vision element to provide in one location the 20-year community vision and

key policies to implement the vision.

- Fills in gaps in the set of framework policies by adding policies that provide the basis for the following elements: Economic Development, Conservation and Natural Environment, Neighborhoods, Historic and Cultural Resources, and Annexation and Intergovernmental Planning.
- Includes policies that provide direction for the future development of Comprehensive Plan elements concerning Community Character and Participation/Evaluation. Adds policies related to community character, including retaining and attracting small- to medium-sized and locally owned businesses as well as internationally recognized corporations, and maintaining Redmond's character as a green city with a small town feel while accommodating urban growth.
- Emphasizes Downtown as the primary community-gathering place, and entertainment and cultural destination for the City, but not the primary employment center, which is Overlake.
- Updates the housing policies to reflect the preliminary preferred growth strategy selected by City Council and clarifies that Redmond is part of a larger sub-area that provides housing supply for people living in the area.
- Increases the emphasis on proactively working with other interests, such as business, organizations or agencies, to implement the Comprehensive Plan, as well as the importance of establishing and supporting a culture of dialogue and partnership.
- Updates the transportation framework policies to reflect feedback from people at recent workshops, discussions among Planning Commissioners regarding important transportation concepts, and advice from the City's transportation consultant on issues and opportunities facing Redmond that will be expanded upon in 2004.

This first phase amendment also includes minor revisions to format, language and organization to eliminate redundancy and improve clarity. The proposed amendments to the vision, goals and framework policies will further define the basis and direction for additional amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Development Guide planned for adoption later in 2003 and in 2004. Among the elements to be updated in 2003 are Housing, Downtown, and Land Use. Additional refinements to the vision, goals and framework policies may be needed with completion of further amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

**Reasons the
Proposal should be
Adopted:**

The proposed amendment should be adopted because:

- It reflects the preliminary preferred growth strategy selected by City Council, significant public input through several community and neighborhood meetings as well as meetings of the Greater Redmond Chamber of Commerce Land Use and Transportation Subcommittees, and issues and opportunities facing Redmond.
- It eliminates redundancies among the existing framework policies.
- It provides the basis and direction for further updates to the Redmond Comprehensive Plan and Community Development Guide.

Recommended Findings of Fact

1. *Public Hearing and Notice.*

a. Public Hearing Date.

The City of Redmond Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed amendment on July 23, 2003. Approximately 10 people attended the meeting for the public hearing. The public hearing was continued to August 13, 2003 to provide an opportunity for public comment on proposed updates to the vision and transportation framework policies; six people attended this meeting. Minutes for the July 23rd public hearing are included in Exhibit D. Comments from the August 13 public hearing are summarized in Exhibit B; minutes will be provided once available.

b. Notice.

- Notice of the public hearing was published in the Eastside edition of the Seattle Times. Public notices were posted in City Hall and at the Redmond Library. Notice was also given by including the hearing in Planning Commission agendas and extended agendas mailed to various members of the public and various agencies. Notice of the hearing was also included on the City's web page and in a mailing to all participants in the Redmond Design Day workshop.
- Copies of the proposed amendment were available in City Hall, from the City's web site and were mailed to members of the Parks Board and Trails Commission.

2. *Public Comments.*

The Planning Commission heard comments on the proposed amendments from 10 people during the public hearings on July 23 and August 13.

Five business people testified concerning industrial uses and zoning in Bear Creek and SE Redmond. They testified that industries in that area function as a group, provide services to the community, supply family wage jobs, and have invested hundreds of millions of dollars. They commented that economic diversity is a necessary part of the community, that industrial businesses need certainty in zoning, and that the industrial zoning needs to be protected. They asked the Planning Commission to include specific reference to preserving and encouraging manufacturing and industrial uses in SE Redmond.

Other testimony concerned the importance of retaining both large and small businesses in Redmond, continuing to support a diverse economy, addressing the transportation needs of freight and goods as well as people, adding specifics to proposed policy FW-10 to indicate areas in Overlake in which housing versus employment is emphasized, adding specifics to proposed policy FW-11 to reference re-evaluation of the commercial growth limit for Overlake, use of the phrase “small town feel”, the importance of understanding mobility conditions (including where, why and when people travel), and the value of clear, measurable policies, giving consideration to who will be affected by policy updates and the potential for unintended consequences.

Public comments also included support for the direction of the proposed transportation framework policies and support for emphasizing dialogue and partnership among city officials, businesses, and other members of the community. Additional comments on specific policies are summarized in Exhibit B. Exhibit D includes written comments and the public hearing minutes.

Recommended Conclusions

1. Key Issues Raised by the Planning Commission

Below is a summary of the Planning Commission’s major discussion issues, including responses to issues raised by the public. Exhibit B includes a more detailed summary of the Planning Commission’s major discussion issues and responses.

a. Industrial Uses

The level of specifics in the framework policies concerning industrial and manufacturing uses was the issue raised by the most people during the public hearing. During their first study session on the framework policies prior to the hearing, the Planning Commission discussed keeping the policy language very general on this issue given that the Commission has not yet discussed or held a public hearing on an amendment they will consider later in the year concerning whether to allow additional housing opportunities in SE Redmond, south of Union Hill Road. During further discussion, the Planning Commission added more specifics in response to public comment to clarify that the upcoming potential plan amendment does not concern industrial land in the Bear Creek Neighborhood north of Union Hill Road, where several of the industrial businesses are located, and to reference manufacturing uses in portions of SE Redmond, Overlake and Willows.

b. Transportation

Transportation was a major discussion area for the Planning Commission. During their first study session, the Commission discussed potential policy themes with Jim Charlier, the consultant assisting the City with development of a Transportation Master Plan. During their second study session, the Commission discussed important concepts or values they believed should be reflected in the transportation framework policies. Exhibit C includes a list of these values. In summary, the important transportation concepts or values identified by the Planning Commission for inclusion in the framework policies include:

1. Character: Ensure that transportation is well integrated with land use and retain Redmond's character as a green city with a small town feel when planning and constructing transportation improvements. The Commission discussed the importance of supporting land use goals through transportation planning and investments. Among the specific ideas regarding the City's green character were the importance of retaining trees, views and other elements of the natural environment; building people-friendly streets; and avoiding the elimination of "green" aspects of transportation projects when costs need to be reduced.
2. Connections: Completing connections in the local transportation system, including those that enhance access to, from and within Downtown, as well as connections among neighborhoods, employment areas, stores, schools, and other destinations.
3. Mobility Choices: Building multimodal streets that offer real mobility choices for Redmond employees, residents and others, and targeting other improvements to help reduce vehicle miles traveled and promote environmentally friendly transportation alternatives.
4. Regional strategies: Helping to improve regional decision-making to support Redmond's goals. Improving access to and the functionality of transportation systems and services that connect Redmond residents and employees with other locations in King County and that move people and goods through Redmond.
5. Implementation: Ensuring the adequacy of transportation systems through prioritizing, funding, and building transportation projects to meet community goals.

The Commission heard general support for the proposed transportation framework policies during the public hearing and addressed several of the specific comments and issues raised.

c. Other Major Policy Areas Discussed and Concepts Added

Old Town: The Planning Commission commented that Old Town has a very special identity, including its traditional downtown character, unique stores, and location relative to the rest of Downtown. The consulting firm, UrbanAdvisors, commented on this character in their retail economic study (available from the Planning Department) and the historic character and uniqueness of Old Town were also values expressed by participants in the Design Day

workshop. The Commission added a framework policy specific to this area to reflect the importance of supporting and enhancing Old Town.

Capital Facilities: The Commission strengthened a policy that speaks to provision of capital facilities to emphasize the need for reasonable certainty in implementation. One Commissioner commented that she has heard several comments from people in the community about gaps between when development occurs and when improvements are provided.

Economic Development: The Planning Commission included language in response to public comment to emphasize the importance of retaining businesses from small-size to large, including corporate headquarters, recognizing that large businesses help sustain smaller businesses, and also added language to reflect the importance of transportation mobility for goods and freight. The Planning Commission also included language to reflect the importance of the economy keeping pace with demographic trends and having an appropriate mix of housing and jobs. Finally, the Commission added language to a proposed framework policy to emphasize the importance of having an economically healthy Downtown.

Planning to Accommodate Growth: The Planning Commission's recommendation reflects the amount of growth being planned for under the preliminary preferred growth strategy:

Proposed FW-11: Plan to accommodate a future population of 65,700 people and an employment base of 94,100 jobs in the City of Redmond by the year 2022.

During the public hearing, the Commission heard a concern that this policy includes a 2022 employment figure as the basis for this Comprehensive Plan update and does not refer to the City's agreement through Resolution 1166 to re-evaluate the Overlake commercial growth limit on or before January 31, 2008.

The Commission considered whether proposed FW-11 should be included and if yes, whether it should refer to the City's agreement concerning Overlake. The Commissioners decided it was important to include the policy because it provides the basis for determining needs for parks, transportation and other capital facilities to serve projected growth, as well as subsequent Plan amendments. The Commissioners believed that referring to the City's agreement concerning Overlake in this policy was not necessary because the agreement is stated in Resolution 1166, through which the City Council selected the preliminary preferred growth strategy, and is included in the Commission's recommendation to City Council on the preliminary preferred growth strategy. Further, the Commission believed that revisions to the growth targets could be needed over time for other reasons, such as annexations, and believed that it is understood that the City's Comprehensive Plan will be updated as needed to reflect these kinds of changes.

Partnership and dialogue: In the recommended policies, the Commission emphasized the importance of establishing and supporting a culture of dialogue and partnership with other interests such as business, organizations or agencies to implement the Comprehensive Plan. This could include partnerships for construction of a Downtown parking facility, to carry out

infrastructure improvements, or to create opportunities for the market to provide innovative housing options. As part of this discussion, the Commission included language to recognize the value that people in the community place on a quality educational system and the need for partnerships with educational organizations. The final language recommended by the Commission was also strengthened in response to public comment.

2. *Recommended Conclusions of the Technical Committee.*

The recommended conclusions in the Technical Committee Report (Exhibit E) should be adopted as conclusions.

3. *Planning Commission Recommendation.*

The motion to recommend the Comprehensive Plan amendments in Exhibit A was approved by a vote of 5 to 0. The Planning Commission also approved their report to City Council, with revisions to be made by staff and Chair Snodgrass to reflect the August 13 public hearing and final study session.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A:	Planning Commission's Recommended Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan
Exhibit B:	Summary of the Planning Commission's Substantive Discussion Issues
Exhibit C:	Summary of Planning Commission Transportation Themes Discussion
Exhibit D:	Public Comments
Exhibit E:	Technical Committee Report

Roberta Lewandowski, Planning Director

Date

Martin Snodgrass, Planning Commission Chairperson

Date

Approved for Council Agenda

Rosemarie Ives, Mayor

Date